DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 339 184 EC 300 795

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TITLE SCOLA Leisure Activity Fun Guide.
INSTITUTION Arc Ramsey County, St. Paul, MN.
SPONS AGENCY Minnesota Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities, St. Paul.
PUB DATE Apr 91
CONTRACT MGPCDD-17620; MGPCDD-18137
NOTE 61p.; Best available copy. Print in highlighted boxes will not reproduce clearly.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adolescents; Community Programs; *Disabilities; Individual Development; Interest Inventories; *Leisure Time; *Normalization (Handicapped); Parent Role; Program Development; *Recreational Activities; Secondary Education; Self Evaluation (Groups); *Social Integration

ABSTRACT

Intended for parents, school personnel, and leisure staff, this booklet outlines ways a community can overcome obstacles that keep youth with disabilities from enjoying their leisure. First the nature of leisure is considered and a self-evaluation questionnaire is presented. Consideration of leisure in the lives of teenagers with disabilities stresses the value of their inclusion in the same experiences as classmates without disabilities. It is noted that, unfortunately, the typical leisure of such youth does not center on personal choice, friends, and fun but is controlled by others and involves segregated settings. Examples of inclusive activities and suggestions for inclusion of recreational goals in the student's Individualized Education Plan are offered. A simple recreation interest survey for students is given. A six-step action plan to increase inclusion of young people with disabilities is detailed and includes: (1) form a community leisure advisory committee; (2) enlist support of a community leisure planner; (3) involve parents and care providers; (4) train leisure service staff; (5) assist students to be self-advocates; and (6) show that "it works." Also given is a simple eight-step plan to facilitate inclusive leisure experiences. Additional questionnaires provide for comparison among activities, student activity evaluation, and organizational self-evaluation. Includes five references and three recommended resources. (DB)

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SCOLA LEISURE ACTIVITY

FUN GUIDE

by Tip Ray

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SCOLA Project staff wish to acknowledge key players in St. Paul, Minnesota. Through their active involvement and consistent support, **inclusive leisure opportunities** are becoming a reality for young people with disabilities. They're making a difference, TOGETHER!

Presented by:
SCOLA of Arc Ramsey County
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Sponsored by:
The Governor's Council on
Developmental Disabilities

Author: Tip Ray
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Design and Production: Destiny, 2 Inc.

April, 1991

This publication was funded in part through grant number 17620 and number 18137 - under provisions of the Developmental Disabilities Act of 1987 (P.L. 100-146). Content of this document does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities nor that of the

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PREFACE

In 1989, the Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities requested proposals that would "build community capacity to support persons with developmental disabilities and their families." SCOLA (School + Community = Opportunities for Leisure Activities) was funded to address the leisure needs of youth ages 14-21 who have severe developmental disabilities and attend St. Paul, Minnesota Public Schools. SCOLA was designed to be a joint effort between the schools, students, parents, leisure service providers, and other interested community members who, together, as "key players," would comprehensively address these leisure needs.

Community leisure programming for persons with developmental disabilities is an ongoing concern to parents, careproviders, teachers, and advocates. It is of particular concern for students who are nearing graduation. All too often young adults with severe disabilities waste their lives sitting in front of a TV set because they have never had the opportunity to be with the rest of society. Providing these youth with opportunities for leisure experiences in settings and activities also

Inclusion happens when youth, both with and without disabilities, are included, on a equal basis, in the same leisure environments.

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frequented by their peers who do not have disabilities is worthwhile. The benefits of such shared experiences are many and are noted in this guide. However, the path to inclusion can be fraught with obstacles. Fortunately, these obstacles can be overcome to create avenues of opportunity for youth with developmental disabilities.

HOW TO USE THE "FUN GUIDE"

This "Fun Guide" is for everyone who cares about the leisure future of youth with developmental disabilities. It was developed to share what has worked within the SCOLA Project. We hope that you will find this information useful and will apply these strategies in your own community.

In an ideal world there would be no need for such a guide. Inclusive leisure experiences would be the norm. Whether or not the person has a disability would not matter because the leisure program provider would naturally include and provide necessary supports for all persons.

In reality, however, we don't have accessible community-wide leisure services. Leisure agencies vary. Some think separate programs are better. Others value and work toward full inclusion. Many provide a mix.

Parents are often their child's chief advocate, but they may not know that leisure agencies, like public parks and recreation and community education, have a legal responsibility to include persons with disabilities. In fact, they can hold these agencies accountable by insisting on good integrated services.

Finally, many parents, school and leisure staff don't know that there are "tried and true" ways that others have used and that there are people available who know how to use these approaches.

The "Fun Guide" outlines ways in which community members can replicate the efforts of SCOLA in order to overcome the many obstacles that keep youth with disabilities from enjoying their leisure time. By working together, "key players" can assure opportunities and that leisure service systems meet the needs of all citizens.

Here's how the "Fun Guide" can be used by these "key players":

Teachers

Appreciate the value of inclusive leisure programming to assure social integration in high school, as well as successful graduation to post-school environments.

Leisure Agency Staff

Find out what you need to know to include youth with disabilities in your programs. Build your awareness of the leisure needs of youth with disabilities so you can develop "accessible attitudes."

Advocates

Find out what parents need to know to be leisure advocates for their children, plus hold leisure agencies accountable for services that will include children with disabilities.

Parents

Learn about the many "key players" and supports that can assist your sons and daughters to be fully included in school and community recreation programs.

Leisure Consultants and Facilitators (a.k.a. Community Leisure Planner)

Use the "Fun Guide" as a "template" for developing training materials and support strategies for "key players" you encounter.

LEISURE IN OUR LIVES

Indeed! How Mr. Forbes' comments relate to each of us, as unique individuals caught up in our own day-to-day "battles," is worth pondering. It is often claimed that leisure helps us to balance our lives and smooth the rough spots. Leisure enhances our quality of life. It seems important, then, that we have some sense of the role these experiences play in our own lives, if we are to address the leisure, recreational, and social needs of youth with disabilities.

Leisure is distinctly individual. That means it is unique to the person experiencing it. However, there are universal dimensions of leisure:

LEISURE AS TIME.

Freetime is leisure time. It is the time left over ("spare time") when the essential tasks of life are complete.

LEISURE AS ACTIVITY.

We engage in many different "leisure" activities. Persons do this to learn, to be amused, to relax, to connect with the community. Leisure activities can be active (softball, jogging) and passive (reading, TV), and can include nontraditional pursuits such as work-related or home-based activities (some regard doing housework as leisure!).

LEISURE AS PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

If we are acting relaxed without feeling the need to do "something" (the Italians call this "dolce far niente," the sweetness of doing nothing), we may be experiencing leisure. It is one's state-of-being, what one feels before, during or after leisure. It is the reason we choose to do certain activities - activities we enjoy, because they make us feel good.

"There are almost as many forms of recreation and diversion as there are human beings. But it can be laid down as a universal rule that every man, woman, and child needs some kind of recreation, some kind of entertainment, some kind of amusement. We all have to fight the battle of life."

B.C. Forbes
FORBES, June 21, 1982

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Consider these examples of leisure. Look familiar?

- Your noon jog along the river road.
- Lounging poolside with a novel and iced tea.
- Refinishing furniture.
- Rafting on the Colorado River.
- Working 16-hour days for two weeks to finish a proposal on a pet project for work.
- Delivering "hot meals" at the homes of elderly persons.
- Writing letters.
- Doing nothing...nothing at all.

EXERCISE:
To help with your leisure self-analysis, complete the form "WAYS I LIKE TO PLAY." Take time to share your responses with others. Parents, compare what you like to do with what the teen in your home likes to do.

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Ways I Like to Play

My Leisure Experiences are Usually...

1. Physical___ or Mental___

Example _____

2. Individual___ or With Others___

Example _____

3. Planned___ or Spontaneous___

Example _____

4. Active___ or Passive___

Example _____

5. Cheap___ or Expensive___

Example _____

6 Self-directed___ or Other-directed___

Example _____

7. Momentary___ or Long-term___

Example _____

8. My very favorite leisure experience is...

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. It is my favorite because...

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. This is when I get to enjoy this leisure experience again...

Date/day_____ Time_____

11. I want to try/do more of this (these) leisure experience(s)...

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. List 3 steps you can take to achieve #11 above.

(1.)_____

(2.)_____

(3.)_____

TEENS WITH DISABILITIES: LEISURE (?!) IN THEIR LIVES

What of youth who have developmental disabilities? What is the nature of their leisure?

The most appropriate and effective way of addressing the leisure needs of youth with disabilities is to expose them to the same opportunities and experiences enjoyed by their classmates who don't have disabilities. This means that the student with a disability should be able to paint scenery for the drama club production, contribute time and talent to the yearbook, go on co-ed outings to skate, and provide community service to assist at food shelves, etc.

We have also learned that both students with and without disabilities can benefit positively from leisure times that are shared:

- As leisure options increase, so do students' choices;
- Students learn activities and social skills in ways typical of other teens and young adults;
- Positive relationships started in leisure settings, lead to friendships and other personal commitments;
- Students without disabilities value differences and begin to appreciate capacities of persons who have disabilities;
- All students develop better self-concept and self-esteem;
- By taking risks, and trying new things, all students learn from failures, as well as successes, thereby enhancing personal growth and development;
- Students with disabilities become "students first" and lose the "special" label;

"It is a happy talent to know how to play."
Ralph Waldo Emerson

- Students without disabilities become role models, co-participants, and friends rather than tutors, helpers, or "special friends."

- Leisure development enhances success in the workplace and acceptance in the community, leading to full inclusion.

Unfortunately, students with disabilities are excluded from participating in programs currently offered to typical teens. A prevalent feeling is that certain extraordinary or "special" accommodations must be in place before youth with disabilities can participate, even partially, and have a "positive" or "productive" leisure experience. Accommodating these youth has meant putting them in "special" settings and activities that further contributes to their isolation and segregation from their classmates. While it is usually true that these youth need some measure of support, (as will be explained further on in this guide), these supports can be applied to recreation that bring youth with and without disabilities together.

The typical leisure of youth with disabilities does not revolve around friends and fun, personal choice, or positive and valued personal identity. Rather, it all too often looks like this:

As "key players," what roles can we play to make the leisure time of these youth more like their classmates?

During the school day:

- students go on outings with classmates who are also disabled;

- staff/adult-to-student ratio is very high;

- ongoing activities (bowling) take place when community members are not there;

- field trips occur often with little teaching of leisure skills;

- activities are often based on adults' interests vs. actual interests of students;

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- focus is on traditional activities (bowling, swimming);

- student involvement becomes the "project" of school service clubs vs. being a participant of the club.

▶ **After-school:**

- students are bussed home;

- parents, neighbors and others must address the leisure time of students at home;

- if the school offers "adapted" after-school activities, the program is designed for youth who need minimal hands-on support.

▶ **Weekend and Vacation Days:**

- continued reliance on family, neighbors, and others to assist with recreation;

- students must attend summer school (increased focus on field trips and staff directed leisure);

- students attend residential and day camps only for persons with disabilities;

- students attend drop-in activities (Friday Night dances; 2X/week social club) usually designed for persons who are quite independent.

"LEISURE 'R US": TEENS WITHOUT DISABILITIES

Take a few moments to watch teenagers recreate. They are passionate about the use of their free time. Why do they do what they do? Well, this is a question that often eludes and confuses parents, who hope that their teenage son or daughter will soon "grow out of it."

Teens live for the moment and love to enjoy themselves. Leisure is an important way for teens to express themselves. Teenagers also use leisure as one way to move from childhood to adulthood. In high school, many external demands are placed on teens in order to prepare them for life after high school. Throughout this time, youth are constantly trying-out new experiences; experiences revolving around social relationships and constantly changing notions of fun and amusement. These youth clearly view recreation as one way to "escape" routines and responsibilities of school, home, and, for many, part-time work. At the same time, leisure is a way of testing personal and interpersonal limits, all part of growing up and learning to be an adult. Parents and teachers want them to get the education they feel is needed to get a job, go to college, and live a meaningful life in the community. Teens have a completely different idea of how they would prefer to spend their time!

Teens quest for identity, autonomy, and affiliation with "like thinkers" is manifested in their leisure. For the majority of youth, the leisure activity is "hanging-out" with friends. Places change, but common gathering spots are: shopping malls, fast-food restaurants, neighborhood parks, and friends' homes.

School and community agencies also organize activities that enable youth to have fun, be with friends, plus help them to mature.

Schools, for example, have provided opportunities through various extracurricular activities like:

- **team sports** (football, hockey, track, volleyball)
- **music groups** (band, chorus, orchestra)
- **clubs** (drama, chess, debate, science)
- **co-ed outings** (mini-golf, bowling, ski)
- **publications** (yearbook/school paper)
- **service groups** (Key Club; Conservation Club)

Youth serving agencies, common in most communities, complement school programs by offering:

- Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts
- Boys and Girls Clubs
- 4-H
- YMCA/YWCA
- church youth groups
- municipal parks and recreation programs

Sometimes "charter partnerships" are formed between schools and these agencies to reach youth more effectively, plus to combine limited resources (staff, play areas, equipment).

Activities are designed to meet a broad range of interests and abilities of students. The pace of the activity, with support from a leader, is controlled by the participant, contributing to that sense of freedom and control desired by the youth. Activities take place right after school, times convenient to the student, as well as parents, many of whom are still at work.

Parents and other adults are expected to provide guidance as teens act upon their leisure interests. Teachers, for example, can wear dual caps and be organizers, coaches, leaders, advisors, and instructors in organized recreational activities offered by schools, in addition to their classroom duties. They can also play a valuable role as "leisure educators" to students, assisting them to sort out personal values and attitudes about leisure. Parents, too, are expected to expand their roles to include volunteering personal resources (such as,

Ted, a regular education student, offered to assist summer school students who have severe developmental disabilities to participate one afternoon in a mini-golf program. He was asked to help a student who uses a wheelchair to "putt" using an adapted "club." Ted enjoyed his experience so much, he offered to come back in subsequent weeks which he did.

time, money, energy, abilities, and carpooling) to help support activity involvement for participants. Parent and teacher involvement helps to compliment the efforts of leisure professionals.

When compared, the leisure patterns of youth with and without disabilities is radically different! If you believe in inclusion, it is your job, along with others, to break this pattern!

youth with disabilities	vs.	youth without disabilities
adapted, "special"		typical, normal
usually with family and classmates with disabilities		usually with friends or diverse group of participants
large groups		small groups
staff/family chooses few options/opportunities		youth chooses many options/opportunities
dependent on others to participate		relies on others as needed (interdependent)
students have fun and solidify relations with "paid friends"		students have fun, plus learn new skills, make friends, solidify old friendships
nothing left to chance, "failure" not an option		risks allowed, and valued, learn from failures
focus is on what youth can't do because of disability		focus is on what youth has a potential of doing, their capabilities

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THE "TRANSITION" YEARS

Students with disabilities, ages 14-21 years, who are attending high school and receiving special education services, are in the "transitional phase" of their educational programming. Transition planning focuses educational programming in those areas critical to the student's life once s/he graduates. Students concentrate learning on those skills and behaviors that will enhance participation, interdependence, and contribution in current and future living, learning, working, and leisure environments. Opportunities to learn and practice social and recreational skills has long been considered important for high school students who do not have disabilities. Therefore, one can correctly assume that leisure education, skills development, and participation are legitimate areas of concentration for students with disabilities who are in these transition years.

PL 101-476, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (formerly PL 94-142) supports recreation as a related service that can enhance a student's educational objectives. Unbeknownst to many, parents have a right to request appropriate recreation services for their child.

Specifically, when identified as a need on the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), recreation can focus on these important elements.

- assessment of the student's leisure;
- leisure education to improve the student's lifestyle through development of leisure attitudes, knowledge, and relevant skills;
- provision of therapeutic recreation services (can involve a certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist to plan and implement appropriate leisure interventions);
- active participation in school-sponsored activities (extracurricular clubs, sports, etc.) that take place both in the community and school.

LEISURE INTEREST SURVEY

A Recreation Interest Survey determined that Fred was interested in canoeing, an activity new to him. Mom was supportive because it was very different from the "typical" adapted recreation program offerings currently available. Fred participated in a canoe skills workshop. He says he's ready to try a canoe adventure next summer.

In order for students with disabilities to attain a leisure lifestyle comparable to other classmates, we must find out, first, what interests that student. Once known, teachers, parents, and others can assist that student to act appropriately on that interest, to have opportunities to learn and to practice leisure skills in various settings.

One way to explore leisure interests is to complete the "Recreation Interest Survey." Include the student as you complete the survey, so responses don't have an "adult bias." After all, your ideas of a good time are probably very different from an adolescent's! If the student's leisure has been limited, perhaps taking place mostly at home or at one or two leisure settings, or the student is unable to communicate specific preferences, you will need to make a "best guess" in his or her behalf. Consider these other leisure assessment tips:

- Always use the student's actual age (not mental age) as a guideline to ensure age appropriate activity selection;

- Talk to the student's teachers, friends, classmates, and others close to them for information on leisure interests;

- "Tune-in" to the student's expressions and unique ways of communicating to find out their interests;

- Let the student choose among two or more activities; they'll learn to be more assertive and to take initiative. Plus, they will benefit from the confidence and trust you afford them. (They'll also be less dependent on others to decide for them!)

- Don't be afraid to take risks and try new things. The consequences will be more positive than you may think!

Recreation Interest Survey

(complete based upon the student's experiences, needs, and perspectives)

Student _____

Age: _____ Date: _____

Please check all of the following categories of leisure activities that you enjoy: (give examples)

___Games

___Sports

___Nature and Outdoors

___Collection

___Crafts

___Art and Music

___Education/Entertainment/Cultural

___Volunteering/Community Services

___Organizational/Clubs

___Other:_____

Are you satisfied with how you use your leisure time?__Yes__No
If no, what would you like to change?

_____

_____

Means of transportation: (check all that apply)

_____ Myself _____Family ____Friends

_____Bus/taxi _____Other:_____

_____

Means of communication: (check all that apply)

_____Regular telephone _____TDD

_____Speech (board or otherwise)

_____None ___Sign language ____Other:_____

_____

Do you currently utilize leisure resources in your community?

___Yes ___No If yes, how often?_____

_____

If no, why not?_____

_____

What do you hope to accomplish through your participation in recreation activities?

_____

_____

_____

_____

- Share this information with your community leisure services providers.

Adapted from: *Focus on Abilities: A Guide to Including Persons with Disabilities in Community Recreation Programs.* The AbilityCenter of Greater Toledo, OH, (1988).

ACTION FOR INCLUSION

Many obstacles seem to get in our way as we attempt to create more inclusive leisure service systems. Often we cite the lack of resources (money and staff) or the fact that these youth have disabilities that are "too severe" to have their needs met in already established settings. Senator John Chaffee helps us to put these obstacles in a much better perspective. His "6 Steps to Stagnation" put the burden for change right where it belongs - on us!

Experience has shown us time and again that persons with disabilities will not be fully included in their communities unless individuals come together and work together to effect changes in service systems that historically separate people because of their labels. Integration in leisure settings will not happen by itself! Certainly, some parents and leisure staff are working together to make inclusion a reality for a few individuals. However, in order to achieve a community-wide leisure service system that is open and accessible to all, specific coordinated steps have to be taken. Avoid the "6 Steps to Stagnation." Consider, instead, these:

Six Steps to Stagnation

1. We've never done it that way.
2. We're not ready for that yet.
3. We're doing all right without it.
4. We tried it once and it didn't work.
5. It costs too much.
6. It won't work.

Source: Senator John Chaffee
Keynote Address
1984 TASH Conference

"Six Steps to Inclusion"

Action Step 1:
Form a Community Leisure Advisory Committee
Action Step 2:
Enlist Support of a Community Leisure Planner
Action Step 3:
Involve Parents and Careproviders
Action Step 4:
Train Leisure Service Staff
Action Step 5:
Assist Students to Be Self-Advocates
Action Step 6:
Show that "It Works!"

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"Since serious barriers to involvement exist in our services and communities, any community which hopes to significantly alter the quality of life for its citizens who have disabilities, needs individuals and groups of people who are dedicated to developing alternatives."

P. Hutchison
& J. Lord, 1979

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Action Step 1:
Form A Community Leisure Advisory Committee

Who's responsible?

One of the arguments put forth as a possible obstacle to realizing full inclusion in communities concerns the age-old issue of "who's responsible?" False assumptions and past practices contributes to either continued segregation or flat-out omission of individuals, for example, who have more severe disabilities. Either a token adaptive recreation program exists within agencies, or agencies assume that "others" are providing leisure services. We know that "others" most often refers to parents, careproviders, and therapists.

Even if there seems to be leisure programming for persons with developmental disabilities (ex:, social clubs, Friday night dances, bowling leagues, and Special Olympics), these programs often restrict participation to individuals with less handicapping conditions (i.e., "higher functioning" participants). This confusing and highly discriminatory practice sends a clear message to families who have a member with a more severe disability that their sons and daughters are "too handicapped" to be served by these programs and should look elsewhere. No wonder families have a limited vision of the future of their child. How can s/he possibly be integrated when s/he's not "able" to be in segregated programs?!

Who's responsible? ALL agencies that provide leisure services to the public at large, of course! ALL agencies, whether publicly or privately owned and operated, need to consider persons with disabilities as potential constituents. And, ALL must provide architectural and program access to these persons. Access is assured by state and federal laws such as The Americans With Disabilities Act, Architectural Barriers Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and state human rights legal mandates. Inclusive

recreation is a civil right!

"If we have to open our doors wider, so does everyone else." No one agency wants to be the primary provider of integrated services. Rightly so. But, there are ways that agencies can learn to be more open and accessible and to support each other in the process. Forming a Community Leisure Advisory Committee is a good place to start.

Committee membership.

The membership of the advisory committee would be community members who are personally committed to a vision that youth with disabilities deserve similar opportunities to access leisure experiences as their peers without disabilities and are willing to work toward that vision. Key players can be recruited through school mailings and parent support groups. Others come from direct contacts to leisure agencies and other organizations committed to serving youth with or without disabilities. These key players combine their personal and professional resources for inclusion.

Key players:

- **Parents, family members, and other careproviders of youth with and without disabilities**
- **Youth with and without disabilities**
- **Teachers, Related Services Personnel, School Staff**
- **Advocacy Agency Personnel**
- **Professionals and Consultants who provide technical assistance and training**
- **Others who may be interested and wish to be involved (volunteers, neighbors, business and industry representatives, foundations and other funding sources).**

"Community integration can't be legislated... Ultimately, it is the relationships people have in the community that protect and afford them value."

Rebecca Shuman
ARC-Midland, MI

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Who are the "key players" in your community?

NAME	AGENCY	PHONE

It is important that others besides those who specifically serve special needs groups be involved on this committee. That is, parks and recreation departments need to involve general along with adaptive recreation staff, and so forth. The committee must be careful to include these "generic" staff if any true and longlasting changes are to occur. Also, a majority (50% or more) of the committee membership should represent family members and students with and without developmental disabilities. Incorporating their perspectives is critical in any "action for inclusion."

Functions of the Advisory Committee.

The Community Leisure Advisory Committee can serve as "change agent," effecting entire community service systems. Thus, the advisory committee should perform these primary functions:

1. Formulate and state a common vision of inclusion in recreation settings.

2. Connect with existing planning groups to coordinate interagency efforts and resources.

3. Establish clear agendas and action plans.

4. Incorporate strengths of key players.

5. Represent and advocate for the needs and rights of persons with disabilities.

6. Monitor and evaluate services.

7. Meet regularly to discuss threats and opportunities to full inclusion.

8. Develop and disseminate resources and reports.

9. Design and test strategies that promote positive system change that ensures full inclusion.

10. Create an atmosphere of change and risk-taking.

Meetings should be formal enough to get the job done, but allow dialogue and friendly relationships to take place between members. Monthly or bi-monthly meetings are best. Committee members can take turns hosting meetings. For the host, it is an opportunity to showcase its efforts in serving persons with and without disabilities.

This openness and sharing creates feelings of trust, belonging, awareness, empathy, shared commitment, and accountability - all enhancing the prospects for more inclusive leisure communities. The council then serves to demonstrate, by example, that inclusive communities are possible when persons with similar concerns gather together, and share mutual support, resources, and commitment to all youth.

▼

Which organization in your community would be a good "lead agency?"

_____

_____

_____

_____

Lead Agency Concerns.

It is most helpful to have a "lead agency" that can pull together this committee and coordinate joint efforts to address integration issues. Lead agencies arrange for meeting space, copy and mail minutes, serve as a clearinghouse for other pertinent information and serve as a link between committee members and other key players. Possible lead agencies are:

- Local advocacy agencies (ex., Arc, Center for Independent Living);
- Community Transition Interagency Committees established within school districts (could be a subcommittee);
- Community Services departments (that oversee community education and parks and recreation programs);
- Recreation professional associations (special interest sections of such associations);
- Providers of residential and/or habilitation services for persons with disabilities;
- Any local agencies that provide leisure services to the general public.

Roles and responsibilities of "Key Players."

Initially, there may be some confusion about what part you, as a key player, will have in this "Action for Inclusion." A good way to view your part is to get a sense of how recreational programs are typically planned and implemented. Most community leisure agencies follow a step-by-step process to deliver recreation programs.
It looks like this:

1. Decide agency mission
2. Locate potential participants
3. Identify needs
4. Identify programs to meet needs
5. Publicize programs/recruit participants
6. Register participants
7. Run programs
8. Evaluate programs
9. Summarize and report findings
10. Provide feedback
11. Plan for next time
12. Repeat process

Because schools are not specifically in the leisure service business, the process is simplified. Still, selection revolves around perceived and expressed student leisure interests and needs, as well as faculty willing to organize and run activities. Regardless, every key player can effect each part of this leisure planning in ways that create more inclusive leisure options.

Consider these **"5 Impact Points"** when deciding how you can influence the leisure service process highlighted above:

IMPACT POINT 1: INFORM

Let leisure agencies know who you are, where you live and work, how and why you support inclusive leisure programming, and what barriers you encounter.

IMPACT POINT 2: SHARE

What can you contribute to an inclusive leisure planning process (ex., personal resources - time, training); share past experiences; talk of successes and failures.

The 10+ Hats of Key Players

Teammate
Working together

Representative
Representing yourself, your family, and your agency

Messenger
Sharing information with others

Educator
Teaching others skills for inclusion

Student
Listening and learning from others

Explorer
Charting new routes/taking risks

Guide
Orienting and leading others

Promoter
Speaking up and out about inclusion

Monitor
Evaluating activities and actions

Reporter
Reporting findings and giving feedback

Graduate
Getting credit for a job well done and moving up to the next level

IMPACT POINT 3: PARTICIPATE

Be active in leisure programs for which you have specifically advocated; join advisory and planning groups; encourage others to join in; give youth with disabilities repeated opportunities to participate in agency programs.

IMPACT POINT 4: EVALUATE

Critically view programs to determine if needs and objectives were met; make suggestions for changes; see if skills learned by students are applied in other settings and kept over time.

IMPACT POINT 5: ADVOCATE

Form advisory committees and support groups; speak up and out about issues related to full inclusion; empower others; continue to link-up with persons who make or influence decisions; hold leisure agencies accountable for inclusive services.

As a key player, you will find that you will wear many different hats. These "hats" will assist you in helping other key players, while at the same time benefiting you, and others you represent.

ACTION STEP 2:

ENLIST SUPPORT OF A COMMUNITY LEISURE PLANNER

Wouldn't it be nice to have a "Personal Leisure Planner" - a person who knows you, your leisure interests, your schedule - who can plan the where, when, what, hows of activities that interest you? Everything has been accounted for; nothing left to chance. You can just show up and have fun!

This may be a fantasy for most of us, but why not apply this idea to a select group of people who have been systematically excluded from school and community sponsored leisure experiences - namely, persons with disabilities. Why not enlist a "Community Leisure Planner" who can support persons wishing to be included in school and community sponsored leisure experiences?

Facilitating inclusive leisure experiences for youth with disabilities can be a complex and time-consuming procedure. As both leisure consultant and facilitator, a Community Leisure Planner is ideally suited to this role.

Consider the Community Leisure Planner (CLP):

THE CLP IS A VISIONARY - The CLP understands and practices values of inclusion. The CLP knows that inclusion "just makes good sense" and fully appreciates the benefits derived from these experiences.

THE CLP IS AN ADVOCATE - The CLP is able to convince others of the value and importance of leisure experiences and their relationship to someone's quality of life. The CLP respects and solicits input from the family and youth, empowering them to be as actively involved as possible.

Community Leisure Planner Position Description

- Assist persons with disabilities to be fully included in school and community sponsored leisure programs and settings
- Apply state-of-the-art integration practices to ensure full inclusion and support of persons accessing leisure environments.
- Provide training and technical assistance to leisure staff on integration practices and roles and responsibilities.
- Empower parents and others on issues related to inclusive leisure.
- Assist persons with disabilities to become self-advocates and to practice self-advocacy in leisure settings.
- Serve as a liaison to key players, including attendance at Community Leisure Advisory Committee meetings.

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In Michigan, the state Department of Natural Resources funds a full-time staff position to provide technical assistance to local government agencies on strategies for including persons with disabilities within community recreation services.

A community Junior League presented a small one-time award to a local Arc to support a program that connects persons with and without developmental disabilities in 1-to-1 leisure experiences.

THE CLP IS A PERSON OF ACTION - The CLP has personal and/or professional standing that makes him or her credible to key players. The CLP knows and understands legal mandates that support inclusive leisure options. The CLP knows when to step-in...and when to step-back and let others who are empowered take charge.

THE CLP IS A PERSON OF AUTHORITY - The CLP knows inclusion! The CLP is familiar with and practices state-of-the-art strategies that: empower families; enable students to be self-advocates; train leisure service staff; include individuals within specific recreational settings. The CLP knows the key players and actively networks with each. The CLP is a catalyst for individual and systems change.

Where found.

Sometimes, a CLP can already be found in many of the same agencies that serve on the Community Leisure Advisory Committee. CLPs may be labelled in other ways: Community Leisure Coordinator; Community Therapeutic Recreation Specialist; Special Needs Coordinator; Adaptive Recreation Director; Recreation Director; Leisure Coach; Program Director; Integration Specialist and, so forth. Regardless of the labels we give the staff position, the outcomes remain the same - more leisure options and opportunities for persons with developmental disabilities.

How funded.

Communities wishing to establish a Community Leisure Planner position can approach funding in various ways, if the position is not already tax supported, for example.

State and federal grant money have been sources of funds to establish innovative approaches to service delivery for persons with disabilities; for example, the federal Office of Special Education and state Developmental Disabilities Councils. Collaboration between university recipients

of grants and community leisure agencies is a particularly effective way to set the stage for training and hiring a CLP.

Joint powers agreements, established between two or more communities, are an excellent way to pool fiscal, staff, facility, and equipment resources to assure greater and more complete service coverage. Outcomes of these agreements can include:

- a greater diversity of program offerings;
- availability of specialized resources such as accessible facilities and adaptive equipment;
- ability to hire experienced staff who can get adequate hours because of their ability to work in programs across communities.

An "itinerant" CLP can be hired to travel widely in these communities, facilitating inclusive leisure opportunities for community residents.

Charitable groups and foundations may make available to agencies one-time grants to support innovative programs. Such grants, while nominal in scale, can add to the resources communities already have to support even a part time portion of the CLP's salary, or other activities that enhance inclusion.

Four Minnesota communities have a joint powers agreement to provide recreation and community education services that impact nearly 20,000 plus individuals with disabilities. Likewise, four school districts in the northern suburbs of St. Paul have developed a consortium to provide supported community education to an estimated 14,500 teens and adults with disabilities. CLP-type staff are employed to enhance inclusive leisure options.

Relationship of the CLP with schools

Parents often rely on school staff to suggest leisure options for their child. If school-sponsored options are limited, teachers are sometimes at a loss on where to refer parents in the community. The CLP can be a valuable link between school and community in this regard.

The CLP should be aware of these key people within the schools who can help with their efforts:

Principal - Knows what is happening throughout the building; must be approached if program innovations are

"Project Bridge," which addresses the leisure education and lifestyle needs of young adults with developmental disabilities, was funded with a one-time United Way grant. Agencies cooperating on this project are a county Arc, local YMCA, and community education consortium.

planned; can link with regular education students, teachers and groups.

Special Education Supervisors and Coordinators - able to locate specific groups of students who are at risk of being unserved or underserved.

Special Education Building Facilitators or Child Study Team Leaders - most frequent contacts; can effectively reach individual students; can help with access to other key individuals in school; provides contacts with parents; lends credibility to inclusion efforts.

Special Education Teachers (includes Adapted Physical Education and Community-Based Education teachers) - able to give critical information and guidance about students in their classrooms and what is parent's vision for the student; information can be disseminated through them directly to students and parents.

School Social Workers and Counselors - able to connect with specific students and families; information and referral.

Teachers, Activity Club Advisors - able to connect regular education students in possible integration/peer support efforts.

The CLP should keep in mind that the middle to upper level administrators (principals to school board members) are important, as they make and endorse school policies related to inclusive programs and practices. However, it is the building level people (faculty and staff) who have direct contact with students and parents. Connections and networking are more frequently made at the latter level.

ACTION STEP 3:
INVOLVE PARENTS AND CAREPROVIDERS

As a parent of a child with a disability, you have the right to demand that quality recreational alternatives be made available to your child, just as they are to other youth. Indeed, your tax dollars and charitable contributions (ex., to United Way) support many programs like Scouts, YMCAs, community education, and municipal recreation. You should not have to "fight the system" to get what most people have typically taken for granted. In fact, leisure agencies should be held accountable if they fail to offer programs which include youth with disabilities.

It is a fact that the responsibility of providing leisure services to youth with disabilities falls full force on family members and other careproviders. And, while it is appropriate that these individuals guide the leisure experiences of these children, as would any typical mom or dad, one cannot expect the entire leisure education of the child to take place at home and only with the family.

This is not how a typical family operates, as parents often have the support and guidance of the neighborhood recreation director or the coach of an athletic team at school. Therefore, it should not be the "norm" for families that have a member who has severe disabilities.

In order to exercise their rights to more inclusive leisure services, parents and careproviders need to learn skills which **empower** them to understand, access, and hold accountable leisure service providers.

According to the Cornell Empowerment Group of Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, empowerment is "an intentional, ongoing process, centered in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group participation, through which people who are lacking in an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources."

ARC News, ARC-Oregon, 1990

Building Awareness.

Many parents seem unaware that their children who have disabilities are just as eligible to participate in school and community leisure programs as children who don't have disabilities. By law, leisure agencies that serve the general public must also accommodate persons who have disabilities.

A parent was apprehensive about allowing her daughter to join a community dance program. Her daughter was more experienced in the adapted dance programs offered through parks and recreation. With the support of a CLP, this parent enrolled her daughter on a "trial" basis. The parent has since seen much improvement in her daughter's spirit, enthusiasm, and motivation to go to dance. She has also seen a good relationship forming between her daughter and the dance partner. Instead of staying in anticipation of giving her daughter needed support, the parent now drops her daughter off at the studio, knowing she'll get the support she needs.

Parents have been given the perception that their children are only eligible for recreational programs designed specifically for them (ex., adaptive recreation, Special Olympics). These programs are considered to be the best solution to recreational involvement for youth with disabilities.

This attitude is perpetuated as parents continue to be referred to adaptive offerings without having any real choice to have their child included in alternatives that bring them into closer contact with youth who do not have disabilities. Parents usually have a narrow choice: adaptive programs or no programs. Hardly a choice at all!

Rather than accepting this "norm" for youth with disabilities, parents can begin to plan a different leisure future for their child. Creating a vision of this future is an essential first step. This "future" can be short range (this school year) or long range (once s/he graduates) in scope.

Complete the form " A Leisure Future for My Child." Refer to the "Ways I Like to Play" and "Recreation Interest Survey" forms you completed earlier. These will assist you in creating the "vision" so that it reflects your child's interests, as well as your values and family needs. Barriers are often easy to identify. However, as you consider ways to overcome these obstacles, you may wish to consult friends, teachers, advocates, and leisure staff, who can come up with creative approaches. Remember - there are many other "key players" who can take responsibility for assuring that inclusive leisure options are available. Be sure to identify and call on them to assist you.

A LEISURE FUTURE FOR MY CHILD

This exercise is to help you look into the future and think about the type of activities you would like to see your child involved in.

1. Identify future activities.
2. List current activities.
3. List possible barriers
4. List possible ways to overcome those barriers.

1. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

2. CURRENT ACTIVITIES

3. BARRIERS

4. WAYS TO OVERCOME BARRIERS

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Parents and careproviders can get involved in these additional ways as they plan inclusive leisure futures for their sons and daughters.

1.You're not in this alone. Join a parent support group (contact your school). If there is no group, get together with friends and form one. If you think you are ready to influence policies on a systems level, join a Community Leisure Advisory Committee, if one exists. Many leisure agencies have advisory boards. Become a member.

2. Stop by your local recreation agencies and introduce yourself. By getting to know one another, sharing the vision, describing unique characteristics and capabilities of your child, and the benefits s/he can receive through participation, you can "nip in the bud" any attitudinal barriers you may be likely to encounter and "set the stage" for inclusion. **For some, this may be the only step needed to get the child successfully included.**

3. Share the vision with teachers. Understand how leisure fits into the child's lifestyle now and after graduation. Make sure that leisure related goals and objectives, if an educational priority, are incorporated into the youth's individual education plan (IEP).

4. Make a thorough assessment of who can assist your child to be included and supported in leisure activities. Other family members, neighbors, regular "babysitters," and your child's friends and classmates can be called upon to co-participate in activities, if needed. Acquaintances outside the family are often willing to help out - they just need to be asked. If this isn't possible, determine if funding for personal care attendants, for example, can support some community recreation involvement.

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5.Keep a current list of other "key players" - names, agencies, phone - so that you know who to contact to get further assistance. Get on mailing lists.

6. Learn the legal and legislative mandates that insure inclusion. If you confront resistive systems and staff, know your rights and who to contact. Contact your local Arc or disability and state human rights groups for assistance.

7. If your child currently attends adaptive recreation programs, evaluate this involvement by asking these questions:

- -Does this program teach my child skills that can be applied in "real life" situations?
- -Is my child learning skills that make him less dependent on parents and others?
- -Does this program serve as a "stepping stone" to opportunities that will help the child to grow, develop and enhance his integration and inclusion?
- -Does what he's doing here enhance his acceptance, value, and appreciation among his peers?
- -Does my child really like being at this activity? Is he really having a "good time?"

"(Empowerment) takes more than having an authority bestowing power - there must be a readiness to take on what may well be not so much a privilege, but a burden."

Gunnar Dybwad

Susan Hamre-Nietupski and her colleagues (1988) stress the importance of parent involvement. They state that "parents can bring (a) an intense, energetic commitment to their children and a strong desire for a better life in the community; (b) intimate knowledge of their childrens' needs and the ability to articulate those needs to the general community; (c) the ability to network with other parents and influence community leaders through the advocacy process." (p. 252)

ACTION STEP 4: TRAIN LEISURE SERVICE STAFF

Most leisure agencies recognize their responsibilities in including persons with disabilities. However, there is considerable discussion about how best to serve these "special population" groups.

Youth with disabilities need opportunities that not only assist them to live, learn and recreate IN the community, but enable them to become a part OF the community. We know that physical integration is occurring. How can we facilitate social integration, as well?

Whether or not youth with disabilities get a chance to be both physically and socially integrated in leisure settings and programs really depends on the agency's commitment to accessible services ("we will not discriminate on the basis of handicaps..."), the allocation of scarce resources to address the individual's need to be accommodated, the attitudes of leisure staff who have the power and autonomy to determine to what extent accessible services and "reasonable accommodations" are considered a priority, and the willingness to involve parents as critical resources.

Adapted recreation programs are often viewed as a panacea that fills the needs of youth with disabilities. Because they have been perceived to be the only recreational alternatives for youth with disabilities, these "special" leisure opportunities continue to be in high demand.

ARE YOU AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY RECREATION PROVIDER?

Does your organization:

YES	NO	
___	___	Consult with community residents who are both disabled and nondisabled to determine their interests and needs?
___	___	Plan programs to meet the identified interests and needs of persons who are both disabled and nondisabled?
___	___	Meet with parents to plan services for children who are disabled?
___	___	Provide programs in facilities that are barrier free?
___	___	Promote your programs to both persons who are disabled and nondisabled?
___	___	Plan purchases of new equipment that can be used by both disabled and nondisabled participants?
___	___	Prepare individuals with disabilities to participate as independently as possible in all phases of recreation programs?
___	___	Provide volunteer support for persons who need physical assistance in order to participate?
___	___	Focus on each individual's abilities rather than their disabilities?

If you have answered yes to all these questions, congratulations! You are an equal opportunity recreation provider.

Source: *Focus on Abilities: A Guide to Including Persons with Disabilities in Community Recreation Programs*. The AbilityCenter of Greater Toledo, OH (1988) and the National Recreation and Park Association.

Inclusive language is inviting language:

"The Park and Recreation Board actively seeks and supports participation by persons with disabilities in recreation programs and services."

Assuring Access.

There are many approaches leisure staff, in both school and community leisure settings, can take to assure access and inclusion. Some actions include:

1. Do a self-assessment to determine if and to what extent you currently meet the qualifications of "An Equal Opportunity Recreation Provider " (complete questionnaire in this section). Review the findings with other members of your school faculty or agency staff to determine specific steps you can take to correct deficiencies.

2. Provide ongoing opportunities for staff training on the following topics:

- **Rationale for inclusive leisure:**
  - -benefits for youth with and without disabilities
  - -legislative mandates which support inclusion
  - -philosophical underpinnings of inclusion
- **Roles and responsibilities of "key players:"**
  - -parents, participants, advocacy groups, schools and various leisure providers
- **Strategies for inclusion:**
  - -creating "accessible attitudes" among staff
  - -ways to attract and support individuals in programs (publicity, activity analysis, adaptations)
  - -evaluating and soliciting feedback on efforts
  - -networking and resource development

Recruit trainers from local universities, advocacy agencies, centers for independent living, disability rights councils, parent groups, and leisure agencies.

3. For schools:

- Include leisure agency staff on transition interagency committees, parent support groups, and other advisory groups which discuss leisure related issues.
- Involve leisure agency staff as individual education and transition plans are developed which link students to community leisure programs.
- Insist that students with disabilities be an active part of, not a "function" of, school clubs.
- Develop partnerships with community leisure agencies so that students become acquainted with and learn to access these agencies.

Schools need to realize that parents, in particular, rely on their guidance and support in linking students to existing extracurricular activities like clubs and teams. In many communities, school-run programs are the primary organized activity for teens. If youth with disabilities don't get connected to these activities, chances are that they won't be connected anywhere else! Schools, then, play a vital and initial role in advising parents of leisure options and opportunities.

4. For community leisure agencies:

- Examine your program planning process for ways to include youth with disabilities and their families in planning and decision making, including:
  - actively solicit and involve youth and parents on boards and advisory committees.
  - have staff contact places where youth with disabilities live to survey needs and interests; get feedback on past efforts.
  - designate a key staff person to act as facilitator of inclusive experiences.
  - include statements in promotional literature on policies of inclusion; give potential participants someone to contact.
  - assess architectural accessibility and build changes into appropriate agency budgets.

"If you are a person with a disability, the Community Bridge will provide the assistance you need to participate in (Community Education) programs listed in this brochure."

Separate Recreation is Not Equal Recreation.

During staff training week, nearly 50 trip leaders of Wilderness Adventure programs sponsored by a metro YMCA heard a rationale for including youth with disabilities in their programs. Later in the day, 15 staff discussed specific strategies for inclusion. About six staff will actually lead trips which are inclusive of any person. The others were there out of interest and personal motivation. This contact led to the successful inclusion of a teen with autism on a week-long adventure.

- involve parents, teachers, careproviders and others knowledgeable of the student when designing adaptations and modifications that promote participation and inclusion.
- invite parents, persons with disabilities, teachers and advocates to assist in staff training and development.

Community agency staff need to recognize that a severe gap exists between school and community options for teens. They need to establish additional (or NEW) program opportunities and leisure environments to support all youth. Through partnerships with schools, community agencies can assist students with disabilities and their families in finding different alternatives that can meet the leisure needs and interests of these youth. School and community partnerships can create options like these:

•Drop-In Centers
•School-sponsored programs in YMCAs and other community centers
•Leisure education and leisure lifestyle classes through community education
•Volunteer and youth community service activities with charitable organizations
•Mentoring of young adolescents by college aged students
•"Leisure Connections" programs which pair young adults with and without disabilities to do community-based leisure activities
•In-school scouting programs which link young teens with and without disabilities in leisure awareness and social activities.

ACTION STEP: 5
ASSIST STUDENTS TO BE SELF-ADVOCATES

As it relates specifically to persons with disabilities, self-advocacy has been defined as "speaking and acting for yourself... deciding what's best for you and taking charge of getting it...standing up for your rights as a person. (Technical Assistance for Self-Advocacy Project, Kansas). It can also mean supporting other persons and groups of persons to be self-advocates and to promote self-advocacy.

Disabilities are characteristics that make a person unique and enhances their individuality. But, self-advocates draw the focus away from descriptive or diagnostic labels as they let others know they have the same needs, interests, and rights as anyone else.

Learning and practicing self-advocacy takes place, on an on-going basis, in the classroom, workplace, neighborhood, home, and recreation center. Teachers, co-workers, parents, friends, neighbors, activity leaders, advocacy agency personnel, and others are all responsible for promoting self-advocacy and assisting persons to gain these skills.

Self-advocacy should become an integral part of the transition-aged student's course of study - both incorporated within existing curriculum and developed as a unit of study. In the former, students should be given ample opportunities to be involved in decisions that determine their educational future, including leisure experiences, and to make choices among alternatives. In the latter, students can gain greater awareness of self-advocacy issues and practice skills and behaviors for self-advocacy. A sample presentation on self-advocacy would include:

1. What is "self-advocacy?"
2. Barriers to self-advocacy
3. Video or slide presentation on self-advocacy

"If you think you are handicapped, you might as well stay indoors. If you think you are a person, come out and tell the world."

Raymond Loomis

Representatives of People First and the local Arc spoke with special education students about issues related to self-advocacy. Students practiced making choices and learning how to be assertive through role-playing and discussion. One student said he didn't know that he could be involved in decisions that affect his future.

4. Role-playing self-advocacy - being assertive vs. passive or aggressive
5. Self-advocacy related to leisure
6. Local self-advocacy resources
   - People First chapters
   - Arc's, other advocacy groups
   - independent living associations

More and more, persons with disabilities are being presented in a more positive light, not just as "charitable cases" or dysfunctional human beings. Television and popular print media is beginning to show the world that people with disabilities are people first, and need not be limited in reaching their individual potentials because of their disability characteristics. Perceptions of persons with disabilities is changing for the better!

Changing Perceptions of Persons With Developmental Disabilities

To Foster	To Overcome
Young adult/Adult	Eternal Child
Serious, responsible	Foolish, trivial, need to be entertained
Self-confidant, able	Weak, ineffectual
Capable of learning, being cooperative, making decisions	Lacking skills altogether
Has important things to say and contribute	Has nothing worthwhile to share or add
Understands needs of others and works to benefit others	Selfish, doesn't understand other's needs
Contributes time, energy, talents to serve others	Dependent, expects to be served
Adapts, is flexible in different situations	Too "handicapped" to know when and how to act appropriately
Prevents or solves problems	Is the problem
Has a view of his/her own, speaks up and out for oneself	Needs others to speak for them

(adapted from: *We Can Speak for Ourselves*, P. Williams & B. Schoultz, Souvenir Press, 1982)

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A parent wanted to make sure that the proposed community center had leisure services that could include her son who has a developmental disability. Instead of requesting "adapted" programs that met her son's needs alone, she proposed to officials that a "youth drop-in center" be established for ALL area youth. That way her son could be included in a program that met the real needs of his friends, too.

ACTION STEP 6: SHOW THAT "IT WORKS!"

Everyone needs guidance and support to participate in leisure experiences. Consider the prospective school softball player. She must depend on school staff and coaches to give her the opportunity to try-out and make the team. Parents, friends, and teammates also give support such as rides to and from practice, feelings of membership and identity, moral support, and so forth. And, by definition, this "team" must assist one another if a winning season is to be achieved. Cooperation, coaching, friendship, and continued opportunities and choices are all measures of support for students wishing to play softball.

This scenario is in marked contrast to that which is experienced by persons with severe disabilities. However, one thing is constant: the need for some measure of support. Everyone needs support. It just seems to be a more obvious need for youth with disabilities.

Support for these youth comes in many different ways. Indirect support comes as key players work and plan together to set the stage for inclusive leisure experiences. This support comes from the efforts of the Community Leisure Advisory Committee, Transition Committees, parent support groups, and advocacy by Arc representatives and others. The Community Leisure Planner, when available, also plays a critical role here.

Direct support comes from individuals, such as parents, teachers, leisure staff, and, again, the Community Leisure Planner, who dissect the skill and behavioral demands of a leisure experience and determine IF, WHEN, and WHAT specific and individual adaptations and modifications need to be made to assist a particular youth to be included in an activity. Direct support is the necessary ingredient in assuring that youth with developmental disabilities are not just in an activity, but are able to be an active part of the experience.

It is helpful to the person(s) facilitating youth into a leisure experience to approach this in an organized manner. The following is a simple way of thinking about the most appropriate ways to get youth included in school and community leisure experiences. This is precisely the approach a Community Leisure Planner can use to facilitate inclusive leisure experiences for youth with disabilities.

Let's look at each part of this approach* and then present an example of an actual effort to include youth with disabilities in a holiday volunteer leisure experience.

A Sure Way to Assist Kids with Disabilities to be Included in Recreational Activities

1. What's there to do?
2. Is it worth doing?
3. Visit or call.
4. What is expected?
5. What can the person do now?
6. What extra supports are needed?
7. Was it a success?
8. What's next?

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*adapted from Schleien and Ray (1988).

Is This Activity Worth Doing?

(answer from the student's perspective)

The Activity Is_____

1. Would I like to do this activity?	Y	N
2. Would my friends, or other kids my age, do this activity?	Y	N
3. Will I get something out of it?	Y	N
4. Do I have the $ $ $ to do this activity?	Y	N
5. Do I have the "stuff" (clothing, equipment) to do this activity?	Y	N
6. Can I get there?	Y	N
7. Will the instructors/leaders consider my needs to help me be as included in the activity as possible?	Y	N
8. Can I get into the place where the activity is going to be?	Y	N
9. Will my parents and others who care about me support my involvement in this activity?	Y	N

If you have answered YES to most of these questions, join in and have fun! If NO came up once too often, try another activity!

1. WHAT'S THERE TO DO? - You should gather information about the various leisure opportunities that currently exist for youth and young adults (ages 14-21 years), since these are the activities in which we hope to include youth with disabilities. You can do an "inventory" of alternatives by driving around your neighborhood, looking in the phone directory, reading your newspapers, contacting the Chamber of Commerce, and stopping by various leisure centers to pick up program brochures. It might be helpful to collect and put information in a 3-ring binder for easy reference. Also, speaking with other parents and questioning other teens can help you learn what teens like to do for fun.

List things to do in your community.

EXAMPLE:
Since high school aged youth are being approached to do more community service, holiday volunteer experiences were considered. Holiday related projects at the Salvation Army (toy distribution) and a local community center (food distribution) were advertising their need for volunteers to assist over the holidays.

2. IS IT WORTH DOING? - Answering this question from the student's perspective helps to affirm interest and actual ability to get involved. Complete the checklist "Is This Activity Worth Doing?"

EXAMPLE:
Several students with and without disabilities expressed an interest in doing this activity. Because the locations of these experiences were near the schools, transportation was not an issue. Parents and teachers were supportive of student involvement.

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John, a high school student, lives with his elderly grandmother. He is currently learning job skills to make him more employable upon graduation. His leisure experiences have been limited to only a few neighborhood experiences. John learned about a summer camp opportunity for inner city kids his age. A Community Leisure Planner assisted John and his grandmother to complete and submit the registration forms. John made several new friends that week in camp. His grandmother remarked: "I didn't realize that John could even attend a camp that wasn't just for kids with special needs."

3. VISIT OR CALL - People seem to be more comfortable when they know more about the activity - how to get there, where the activity will be, who's in charge, and so on. Having the parent and youth visit the leisure site and staff can ease those first day jitters that are often felt when trying something new. This is a good time to "set the stage" with leisure staff in order to enhance the possibility of a successful and positive leisure experience for everyone - the youth participant, parent, and staff.

EXAMPLE:
The Community Leisure Planner represented the students during a phone call to volunteer coordinators. A meeting to tour the facilities and discuss these inclusion efforts was arranged. The first meeting was between the volunteer coordinators, key agency staff, and the CLP. A second meeting was arranged for a day or two before the experience so that students could meet the coordinators and see where they would be working. In retrospect, these meetings were critical to the success of the inclusion effort. The volunteer coordinator expressed some apprehension and misgivings about involving youths with disabilities. She thought that they would "create more chaos" during this already hectic holiday time.

4. WHAT IS EXPECTED? - In this step, we need to find out what is expected by leisure staff of all participants in a particular activity - are there assumptions of behavior made by staff, will people dress in a particular way, will they know who to ask for assistance, is there a sequence of events from session to session that everyone will follow, and so forth. There

are basically two ways to do this "activity analysis."
a. Ask the staff person or instructor what a typical session looks like - from the moment the participants walk in the door to the time they leave.
b. Go and observe any number of people who are using a particular leisure environment and gain some general sense of how most people access and use the environment.

List, step-by-step, how typical persons enter, use, and leave a leisure activity or setting. Use the "Activity/Comparative Analysis" form in this guide.

If we are expecting youth to learn how to act appropriately within inclusive settings, then we must reference their learning opportunities against skills demonstrated by persons without disabilities.

EXAMPLE:
During the first visit, volunteer coordinators outlined specific roles of volunteers. An "Activity/Comparative Analysis for the leisure experience was done by the CLP. This was so that the CLP would know precisely what the volunteers would be expected to do upon arrival and throughout the experience.

5. WHAT CAN THE PERSON DO NOW? - This step asks us to compare "what's expected" against skills and behaviors the particular youth already has: It is often assumed that if the youth has a disability, s/he will not have the skills needed to participate independently in the activity. CAUTION: This is an "all or nothing" approach that assumes that if the youth doesn't possess all the leisure skills, s/he will get nothing out of the experience.

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It denies that the leisure experience comes in many different forms (remember reading the first sections of this guide?). Some participation in inclusive settings, regardless of extent, is better than continued isolation in segregated programs, or worse yet, no participation. If the youth can do something, anything, give them that opportunity!

EXAMPLE:
With the assistance of parents and teachers, the CLP was able to compare the current skills of student volunteers with those required to do the job. This helped to narrow the need for specific adaptations and modifications to only those skills yet to be learned.

6. WHAT EXTRA SUPPORTS ARE NEEDED? - This is where creativity and active problem-solving results in inclusive leisure experiences. After comparing "what's expected" with "what can the person do now," you decide to nurture and reinforce the parts of the leisure experience the youth can do now and only plan adaptations, modifications, and additional supports in those skill areas left to be learned.

EXAMPLE:
Specific supports were identified and noted on the "Activity/ Comparative Analysis" form corresponding to the skills to be learned. It was noted that volunteers should be encouraged and reinforced positively for demonstrating skills they currently have.

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Activity/Comparative Analysis

Activity_____

A. "What's expected?" (list activity steps, start to finish)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

B. "What can student do now?" (circle number(s) of step(s) that student can do with minimal or no support)

C. "What extra supports are needed?" (list adaptations, modifications corresponding to steps in A. above)

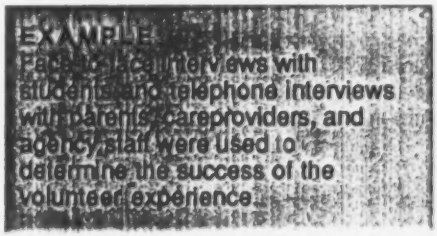
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

etc.

"It's wonderful that someone feels that my child has some worth and can contribute to society. I know that this is an activity that my child can actually do."

-A Parent

7. WAS IT A SUCCESS? - It is important for parents, teachers, and leisure staff to monitor and evaluate efforts made to include the youth in an activity. When done on an ongoing basis, necessary changes can be made to enhance participation that address concerns raised by parents, staff, and participants, as well as help to reduce, or increase as necessary, levels of support to the youth. Everyone gets a sense of how things are working out.


EXAMPLE:
Face-to-face interviews with students and telephone interviews with parents, careproviders, and agency staff were used to determine the success of the volunteer experience.

The results:

"They did a super job and got much accomplished! We want to invite them to a (volunteer recognition) luncheon..."
Volunteer Coordinator

"The students worked hard and got a lot done." "I liked working with the students with disabilities."
Agency Program Coordinator

"It was a good thing to do. It's nice to know that the agency has respect for him and his abilities."

"It was good!" (my son said) 'I want to help out the poor people and share things.' It made him feel good."

"(I was) surprised and amazed that there was something (my son) could actually do."
Parents and Careproviders

Reactions from student volunteers, with and without disabilities, were laced with pride, excitement, boasts, and, in some instances, an expressed interest in doing this again. Student volunteers were given certificates at a recognition luncheon for all volunteers who participated.
Community Leisure Planner

"I'm thrilled that my child has a chance to give instead of always being the recipient."
-A Parent

8. WHAT'S NEXT? - You might want to begin to plan the next leisure experience for the youth. Learn from this effort, build on it, and make any changes that are necessary. Not only look at the direct supports needed to include the youth, but also consider any additional indirect supports (training, advocacy, etc.) that can enhance the experience next time.

EXAMPLE:
During the interviews, the question was asked about future involvement. Agency staff, parents, the careprovider, and students all expressed keen interest in doing something like this again.

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IN CLOSING

"We should hope the day will come soon when such verbal affirmations (like this Guide) of basic human rights and human needs are no longer necessary."

Gunnar Dybwad (1988)

When key people get together to share and work toward a common vision of inclusion, many successes result. Perhaps it is one or another individual or group of individuals who serve as the catalyst and instigator of change. Still, it is the collective efforts of many who must gather their personal and professional resources if changes are to become permanently woven into the fabric of our communities.

Many key players see a part of the vision. But, they need your direct support and involvement if full inclusion is to become a reality soon. It is time to decide what role you'll want to play as we plan, together, for the leisure future of youth with disabilities. Good luck, and best wishes!

Some people see a closed door
and turn away,
Others see a closed door,
try the knob,
if it doesn't open...
they turn away.
Still others see a closed door,
try the knob,
if it doesn't open,
they find a key,
if the key doesn't fit...
they turn away.
A rare few see a closed door,
try the knob,
if it doesn't open,
they find a key,
if the key doesn't fit...

they make one.

-KEYMAKERS

REFERENCES

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We Speak for Ourselves: Self Advocacy by Mentally Handicapped People. P. Williams and B. Schoultz. Souvenir Press, Ltd. 1982.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Minnesota Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities. 300 Centennial Office Building, 658 Cedar Street, St. Paul, MN 55155 (612) 296-4018.

Institute on Community Integration. University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, Pillsbury Drive S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455. (612) 624-4512.

Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights (PACER). 4826 Chicago Avenue S., Minneapolis, MN 55417 (612) 827-2966.